A

SERMON,

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BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

Foreign Missions,

AT THEIR

TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL MEETING.

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SERMON.

PSALM cii, 13, 14, 15.

Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yea the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

THIS Psalm is at once a prayer and a prophecy. It begins in extreme depression, and ends in a strain of elevated and holy confidence. It was written just at the close of the Babylonish captivity, when Zerubbabel stirred up the remnant of the Jews to rise and rebuild their desolate city and temple. For seventy years the church had been in great affliction. She had dwelt among the heathen, and found no rest. "Her tears were on her cheeks." "Her priests sighed." "Her vir-

gins were afflicted, and she was in bitterness." In cruel mockery her enemies "required of her songs, and they that wasted her required mirth." But how could "she sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" It was impossible. Her heart was broken. She could only sit down by the rivers of Babylon and weep, as she listened to the sighing of her harp strings, amid the rustling of the willows upon which she had hung them.

But the night of her affliction was far spent. The day was dawning. God would wipe away all tears from her eyes. He had "graven her upon the palms of his hands, and her walls were ever before him!" "The time to favor her, yea the *set* time was come." He would bring her back to her own land. She should see her temple rise again in beauty and glory; and he would rekindle upon its altar the sacred fire which had been gone out for more than two generations. Nor would he exhaust his mercies in working out this great deliverance for the Jewish church, from a long and grievous captivity. It was an earnest of far wider and richer displays of his grace, when "the heathen should fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth her glory."

For, as Bishop Horne and Dr. Scott have well remarked, in their highly evangelical commenta-

ries, " The object to which the prophets of old had chief respect, was not only the deliverance of Israel from Babylon, and the rebuilding of the material temple, but the salvation of sinners and the erection of the christian church, in the days of the Messiah. So that this prophecy will have a more full accomplishment, when the Jews shall be converted to Christianity and gathered from their dispersion—when the tedious captivity of the church, under the New Testament Babylon, shall be finally terminated, and the fulness of the gentiles, with all their kings and kingdoms, shall be brought into the church.

That the whole world will be christianized—that there is a set, or appointed time for the accomplishment of this great work—that the time is near at hand, and that the work calls for the united prayers and energies of the church, are the leading propositions which I shall attempt to illustrate and establish in the present discourse.

I. *The whole world is to be christianized, or converted to God.* This expectation, on the part of the church, has afforded a great deal of profane amusement, not only to open scoffers, but to pseudo Christians, for hundreds of years; and there are thousands at this moment, under the clear shining of the sun of righteousness, who no more believe

that China and Japan will ever embrace the gospel, than that Pekin and Jeddo will one day be transported to America, by some half dozen of our merchantmen. They unhesitatingly pronounce the conversion of the world to Christianity *impossible;* and of course look upon the missionaries as at best an amiable class of fanatics, who are throwing away their lives, and spending a great deal of money for nothing. Nor is this utter incredulity, of even sensible men, who make but little account of the prophecies, at all to be wondered at. Viewing the world merely with the eye of reason and philosophy, how can they believe that it will ever undergo that great moral renovation, which the church fervently prays for and confidently anticipates? For myself, I frankly confess, that were I to look merely at moral causes and effects, and to reason on this subject, as I do on almost every other, I too should pronounce the conversion of six hundred of millions of pagans impossible. I do not believe it at all, as a logician, nor as a *philosopher*, but simply as a *Christian.* It requires very strong faith in the word of God, even on the part of those who have never visited a heathen land, to bring the millennium near, or to make it certain to their minds that it will ever come; and how much more, on the part of the

missionaries, who go forth to wear out their lives in the "dark places of the earth which are full of the habitations of cruelty." How can they derive the least assurance, from past experience and mere human probabilities, that there will ever be "new heavens and a new earth?"

For what is the actual condition of the heathen world, and what has it been for thousands of years? Confident as infidels and a large class of nominal Christians are, that it can never be induced to embrace the gospel, they have, after all, no adequate conception of the difficulties that are to be overcome. There is one, at least, I mean the desperate wickedness of the human heart, which most of them entirely overlook; but which lies at the foundation of all the rest, and is infinitely more formidable, if possible, than those which they are confident can never be surmounted. Ask the apostle Paul, what the heathen were in his day, and always had been; and if his answer does not bring the cold chills of horror over your every muscle and fibre, tell me. I can quote but a part of it, (covering, as it were, the rest, from very shame, with my hand.) "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four foot-

ed beasts and creeping things." "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness; full of envy, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." What a picture, even when the most horrible part is concealed! And yet, a hundred missionary appeals assure us, that it is now as true to the life, in pagan lands, as if it had been drawn but yesterday. "As in water face answereth to face," so heathenism to heathenism, in every age and in every part of the world. It is a leprosy which time and human medicaments have no tendency to prevent, or to cure; but which spreads its seal over the young flesh of every new generation, with unmitigated malignity. It is a gangrene, which never stops, till it has reduced the whole body to rottenness. So brutal, so malignant, so "earthly, sensual, and devilish" is paganism—so gorged with lewdness and blood—so livid and bloated its breathless carcass, that no combination of epithets can ever convey any thing like an adequate conception of its frightful and hopeless enormity. How, then, can the heathen ever be converted, especially when we consider what true

conversion is—that it is turning "from dumb idols to the living God"—that it is "putting off the old man with his deeds, which is corrupt, and putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"—that it is a total change of habits, propensities and affections—that it is an emerging, as it were, from an ocean of licentiousness and blood—a breaking away from oracles and conjurers and all the entanglements of a wily and corrupt priesthood—a deep loathing of all that was once "rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue," and a delight in the beauties of holiness—an entire renunciation of self-dependence and self-torture, and a cordial acceptance of Christ, as a divine and almighty Savionr.

And what are the means by which this mighty change is to be wrought in the condition, character, and hearts of countless myriads of heathen men and women and children, in Asia, Africa, and ten thousand islands of the sea? According to the Bible, the simple preaching of the gospel is to turn all these myriads from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God. They are to be converted by the instrumentality of men whom they despise, and the presentation of truths and motives which they hate. Dead in trespasess and sins, and festering in their shrouds, they are

nevertheless to hear the voice of kindred dust and ashes, and live.

Again, I say then, as a reasoner, upon mere human probabilities, I am almost ready to join with those who pronounce the conversion of the heathen impossible. But when, as a Christian, I open the Bible, and such passages as these meet my eye, all doubt vanishes ;—"O fools and slow of heart to believe, all that the prophets have spoken:" "With men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible :" "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe : "" Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree :" "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession :" "He shall have dominion also from *sea to sea*, and from the river unto the *ends* of the earth. *All* kings shall fall down before him, *all* nations

shall serve him :" " And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills ; and *all* nations shall flow into it and be saved :" " And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks ; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they *learn war any more.* The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. For the earth shall be *full* of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

These are some of God's great and precious promises concerning the conversion of the world ; and they will certainly be fulfilled. Do we believe it ? Do we feel as certain of it, as that the sun will rise to-morrow ? It seems to me we do not. I am afraid there is still a great deal of unbelief in the church, on this very subject. We give and pray and labor, rather as if we *hoped* the heathen nations would one day be evangelized, than as if we were *perfectly certain of it.* And yet, among all the verities of the inspired volume, there is not one more absolute than this. " Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief."

II. There is a *set*, or appointed time, for the accomplishment of this great work. But before I proceed to the proof, let me explain the proposition. A *set* time may be perfectly definite, as to the day and even the hour, when an event is to happen, or it may embrace a certain period of considerable length, within which some great work is to be done, or some great change is to take place in the condition of a nation or of the world. It is impossible in the nature of things, where human agency is employed. and the grand result depends upon innumerable preparatory and subordinate steps, that the whole should be accomplished in a month or a year. For example; while we date our political emancipation from the fourth of July, 1776, every body understands perfectly well, that the revolution began much earlier, and that it took several years longer fully to establish the independence of the United States. That whole period, therefore, was the *set time* for our deliverance from a foreign yoke. The same remarks, for substance, will apply to the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity. The journey was long, and a considerable time was requisite to prepare for it. The first company, or expedition, under Nehemiah, left Babylon before the main body of the nation was permitted to return ; and it was several years,

no doubt, before the captives were all restored to their own land.

So in laying down the proposition, that there is a *set time* for the conversion of the world, or the coming of the millennium, I do not mean that this mighty revolution will be consummated in a day, or a year, or in *fifty* years, even; but that he who has promised to give the "heathen to his Son for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession," has also designated the period when this promise shall be fulfilled; and that the spread of the gospel will be so rapid and so remarkable, as to make it, next to the advent of the Messiah, the most glorious era in the history of the world. The moral transformation will be so marked, so extended, and so wonderful, that it will be impossible to regard the period in any other light, than as the time appointed by infinite wisdom and benevolence, for the commencement of Christ's millennial reign over all the earth.

That the beginning of this great and glorious epoch is settled and fixed, might be argued from a variety of considerations.

In the first place; no one can question, that if the heathen are ever to be converted, there is, in the eternal purpose of God, a definite period, when they shall be brought to bow down at the foot of

his throne ; nor, that, in the plan and administration of his government, every thing is tending to this grand result. As it stands by itself in the infinite mind, and connected with other events, it cannot be retarded an hour. It is a *set* time, which nothing can alter. Whatever wily or malignant combinations wicked men on earth, and the powers of darkness below may form to put it off, God will "roll on his undisturbed decrees," and accomplish his purposes of mercy, with as much exactness as he regulates the motions of the planetary system.

In the next place ; we might, in the absence of more direct proof, infer with great confidence that there must be a *set* time for ushering in the millennium, from what we know of other grand scriptural eras. One of the most striking of these we find in the history of that remarkable deliverance from captivity, which is so joyfully and triumphantly celebrated by the Psalmist in my text. God had determined, and his prophets had foretold, that the period of this sore national exile should be *seventy years;* and no power on earth could prolong it. When it expired, the time, yea the *set* time to favor Zion had come. Then it was that the Jews took down their harps from the willows, and set their glad faces towards their own land. They

had suffered long and suffered much; but their deliverance was as prompt and signal as their servitude had been grievous.

Just so, also, with their fathers in the land of Egypt. Never was there a more cruel, or hopeless bondage, than that to which they were reduced after the death of Joseph. But it was not to last always. There was a time, yea a set time for their exodus. "And God spake on this wise, that his seed (the seed of Abraham) should sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage and entreat them evil *four hundred years*. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God, and after that shall they come forth and serve me." What matters it, whether the Egyptian slave-holders ever heard of this promise of God to his chosen people, or whether the great body of the Hebrews themselves believed it? Could either their ignorance, or their unbelief, make the promise of none effect? Every rolling sun brought the set time so much nearer, and when the day came, Israel "went out with a high hand."

In like manner was there a set time for the glorious advent of the Messiah, which was plainly indicated by its connection with other great events, and explicitly foretold in prophetic numbers.

Thus the patriarch Jacob prophesied, on his death bed, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." No one, I believe, questions that Shiloh means Christ, and equally clear must it be to every reader of sacred and profane history, that he offered himself as the great atoning sacrifice, just about the time when the Romans came to take away, not "the sceptre" only, but "the place and nation" of the Jews. Still more explicit is the prophet Daniel. "*Seventy weeks* are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince, shall be *seven weeks, and three score and two weeks.* And after three score and two weeks, shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the Prince shall come and shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." I stop not to inquire when these prophetic weeks begun or ended. My sole object in quoting the passage is to show that there was,

not an *indefinite*, but a *set* time, for the manifestation of the Son of God, to take away the sins of the world.

Now, with such examples before us, how can we help inferring, that God must have a set time for the conversion of the world also, even before we inquire what the spirit of prophecy says on the subject? But when we open the Bible, with special reference to this point, we find the commencement and glories of the millennium marked by the sacred writers, with a particularity which pertains to very few other grand prophetic eras. Thus, according to Daniel and the visions of the Apocalypse, the reign of Anti-Christ, or the apostate Romish hierarchy, is to last *twelve hundred and sixty days*, or *forty and two months*. Now all the best commentators, ancient and modern, I believe, agree in reckoning these prophetic days as so many years, and in dating the rapid conversion of the world from the close of this period. If these views are correct, or if the prophetic numbers of Daniel and John refer at all to the final overthrow of the man of sin, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom, then there is a set time for these great and glorious events. I hasten to remark,

III. That the time is *near*. Whenever we use the word *near*, it is to be understood, like every

other comparative term, by the connection. When I say that my next neighbor's house is near my own, I mean one thing: but when I say that Jupiter is near the sun, I mean a very different thing. So in time; when you take out your watch, and tell me it is near *twelve oclock*, I understand you to mean that it lacks but a *few minutes* of it; when you tell me that you was born *near the close of September*, I understand you to mean, a *few days* before the end of the month; when you say such and such events transpired *near* the time of the French revolution, I suppose you mean within a *few years*, either before or after; and when we talk of being near the end of the present thousand years, we mean that by far the greater part of this period has already elapsed. So when I say that the millennium is *near*, I mean that but a little time remains, compared with the long and dreary period, during which the prince of "the power of the air has ruled in the hearts of the children of disobedience."

To go into the subject fully, and prove that the jubilee of universal emancipation is near, would require a volume. I can only glance at it, in the present discourse. Writers on the prophecies are not agreed, and it may be impossible to determine, with certainty, when the *twelve hundred and sixty*

years begin. But whether with some, we date from the year of Christ 606, when the Pope was declared to be universal bishop, or with others, from 756, when he became a temporal prince, the final overthrow of Anti-Christ, which is immediately to precede the universal spread of the gospel, must be near. In one case, it will happen before the end of the present thousand years; and in the other, soon after the beginning of the next. And it is worthy of special notice, I think, that, whatever prophetic data the most approved commentators assume, and whatever trains of reasoning they pursue, they come at last to the same general conclusion, viz., that the millennial reign of Christ over all lands, will commence within about a hundred and fifty or two hundred and fifty years from the present time; and this is a very short period, compared with the five thousand and eight hundred years, which have already elapsed.

Did the time permit, I think it would be easy to show, from the fulfilment of other prophecies, intimately connected with those which insure the conversion of the world, that the time draweth near. But not to insist upon these, there is certainly a great deal in the present state of the world, and in the onward movements of the church, to strengthen the faith of all who have an eye to

"discover the signs of the times." Although there is no active nor latent revivifying principle in any of the forms of idolatry, from which we can derive the least gleam of hope, there are indications, particularly in some parts of India, that it is crumbling down under the weight of its own hoary and unutterable abominations; and that, by thus, without hands, levelling the most formidable bulwarks of paganism, God is preparing the way for the rapid spread of the gospel. It is wonderful to think how many great and effectual doors have been opened, within the last five and twenty years, in every quarter of the heathen world. At the beginning of this period, the question was, Where can we go? Who will receive the gospel at our hands? Who will even allow us to preach it in "the dark places of the earth?" But now I might almost ask, Where can we *not* go? Who—where are the rulers to forbid us, or the people to stone us? Look the dark map of paganism all over, and tell me. What is there to hinder in the thousand islands, with which the great Pacific is sown? What in the great islands of the Indian ocean, so populous, and till lately supposed to be inaccessible to missionaries of the cross? Who now will forbid the church from penetrating into the heart of Africa, and carrying the news of salvation to all the

benighted tribes of that long abused and blood-stained quarter of the world? What barriers, but those of everlasting winter, are there, to prevent her visiting either pole, with the Bible in her hand, and the accents of salvation upon her tongue? "Lift up your eyes round about and see." Burmah is open, and all India is open, from Persia to China, from Cape Cormorin to the Himalay mountains. Indeed, with the exception of the boasted "Celestial Empire," and Japan, which must now be regarded as the capital of Satan's empire, and perhaps Madagascar, where his incarnation is scarcely less fierce and terrible, what part of the heathen world is not open to the heralds of peace and salvation? Nay, why do I except China even, when so many millions of her people are accessible along her southern borders, and when the great wall, which has so long kept out pure Christianity, seems ready to fall down, even before the seventh blast of the gospel trumpet?

As for Turkey and its dependencies, so long desolated by the locusts of the Apocalypse, who does not see, that the crescent is on the wane? Even now the Moslem power is broken, and the sultan holds his capital by Russian sufferance. Nor is there less encouragement, when we look at the decay of the Romish power, which so long

held the most enlightened parts of the world in cruel bondage. How wonderful the change, since the Pontiff set his foot upon the necks of the most powerful kings, and "exalted himself above all that is called God, and is worshipped." How tottering is his throne, even in the "Eternal City," and how tattered is his scarlet colored robe! Who now trembles at the thunders of the Vatican? What petty prince is there, who might not, if he chose, roll them back, and batter down its tottering walls? Where are the Jesuits?—where the ghostly tormentors of the inquisition? France is open to protestant missionaries? Spain and Portugal cannot long remain shut; and who can doubt, that the same burning zeal which fired the breasts of the apostles and other primitive missionaries, would soon find some door of entrance into Rome itself?

But we have still surer indications that the time, yea the *set* time to favor Zion is come, and that the millennium is near at hand, in the fact, that the servants of the Lord "take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof." Although the church, as a body, is not even now more than half awake to the spiritual wants of the world, and her hand is but half opened to supply them, she has never, since the days of the apostles, felt so much, nor prayed so much, nor done so much, as within

the last few years. These are among the most animating signs of the times. In all other cases, we judge of what may be reasonably hoped for and expected from men's undertakings, by the scale of their preparations, the instruments employed, and the manner in which they commence and prosecute their enterprises. Thus, when large companies are formed for internal improvements, in a new state or territory, and engineers are abroad examining the face of the country, and surveying the most practicable routes for rail-roads and canals, and we see great quantities of materials collected, and the work here and there begun, all along these lines of communication, we say that a new era has dawned upon the wilderness, and look forward with confidence to the completion of works so auspiciously begun.

What, then, may we not expect, when we hear so many holy prophets rejoicing over the conversion of the world, and look at the preparations which are now making, in obedience to the command of Christ, and under the smiles of a favoring Providence, for the universal spread of the gospel. Missionary societies, Bible societies, and other kindred benevolent associations, are certainly among the brightest glories of the age in which we live. With what extraordinary zeal and success, under

the auspices of these heaven-born institutions, have heathen countries lately been surveyed, with reference to immediate occupation. How many hundreds of devoted missionaries have been sent out to the east and the west, the north and the south. In how many places have these indefatigable laborers already broken ground, along every line of communication that has been explored, and how many watch-fires have they kindled up, on the frowning promontories and head-lands of pagan continents and islands. How many christian schools and churches have they actually planted, around the temples of Moloch, and even upon the ruins of his blood-stained altars. Into how many heathen languages have the Scriptures been translated, and what multitudes, especially of children in the schools, are beginning to "read the wonderful works of God, in their own tongues wherein they were born." It is true, and it is painful to think of it, that but few, in comparison with the whole population of the heathen countries over which christian missionaries are scattered, have as yet been savingly converted to God; but the work is auspiciously begun at hundreds of important stations; and, while looking at the dark side of the picture, we ought not to forget how much of the time and expense, which are requisite for the ac-

complishment of all great enterprises, are necessarily absorbed in mere preparations. Before a vast wilderness can be turned into fruitful fields, the trees must be cut down with great labor, the ground must be broken up and mellowed, the good seed must be sown, and then the husbandman must wait patiently for the harvest. Before a fortress, strong by nature, and made almost impregnable by art, can be taken, munitions must be collected for the seige, a powerful battering train must be brought up and planted, before a cannon ball is fired; and when all things are ready, and a few inconsiderable out-posts are got possession of, and the trenches are opened, more that tells upon the destinies of a nation may be effected in the bombardment of a week, or a day, than whole years of costly preparation had accomplished.

So in the system of means which God has ordained, and has for these many years been bringing into action, to "subdue all things unto himself," when the funds are provided, and the sacramental host is once fairly in the field, we may consider the conquest of the world as half achieved. Looking at the subject in this light; considering, too, how the all but miraculous agency of steam, and of other kindred improvements and inventions, is moving all the continents and islands of the

globe along side of each other; and marking the moral and physical ascendency, which christian nations are so rapidly gaining over all the rest of mankind, how strong is the evidence, that the millennium is nigh at hand.

It only remains to be shown,

IV. That the hastening on of this glorious period, calls for the united prayers and energies of the church. Some of the would-be wise men above what is written, and who have never learned to put causes and effects together, may here throw in one of their favorite objections, and say, "If God has set the time, and it is so near, then he will certainly convert the world whether the church moves or not." But so did not Paul reason, when the mariners were about to take the boats and leave the vessel to its fate. "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." So did not Daniel reason, when the time of Judah's deliverance from the Babylonish captivity drew near. He did not pray the *less*, but the *more*. As soon as he "understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem, he set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fastings and sackcloth and ashes."

This was acting in strict accordance with God's method. He fulfils his great and precious promises, in answer to prayer, and by human instrumentality. Without an entire change in the economy of grace, the world can never be converted in any other way. The shorter the time, therefore, and the greater the certainty of its near approach, the more urgent the call for prayer, and effort, and self-denial, and largeness of heart, in the whole church. If she had a thousand years left, in which to spread the gospel throughout the world, she might take the work more leisurely. But having lingered so long, she has not another moment to lose, nor a breath of prayer to withhold. The gospel ought, centuries ago, to have been preached to every creature; and now she is in the straitened condition of a slothful servant, who, having idled away most of the precious hours alloted to his task, is obliged to strain every nerve to accomplish it before the going down of the sun. God will neither wait for, nor excuse the church. She must "do whatsoever her hands find to do with her might," or meet his awful frown.

I know that unbelief may come tardily up, with a faltering step and downcast look, and ask, "how it is possible for the whole world to be converted, by the feeble instrumentality of the church, in one

or two hundred years?" How is it possible! At the rate she has gone on during the greater part of the time since the command was given, it would not be possible in a *hundred millions* of years. But only let her "repent and do her first works;" let her spread the gospel but half as fast as she did in her primitive zeal, and how soon would it be preached from the rising of the sun to its going down. Surely she is straitened only in her own bowels. "The Lord's hand is not shortened that he cannot save, nor his ear heavy that he cannot hear."

But here, peradventure, some one will ask, Has not the chariot of salvation been lately arrested in its progress, and its wheels even rolled backward? Where are the forty missionaries of this single Board, who should have been sent into the field two years ago? The mission presses, too, why do they stand still? Why have they been abannoned to rust and cobwebs, at the very moment when their aid was more loudly called for than ever, and was every day becoming more and more efficient? Why are the schools broken up and scattered? Ah, why those "longing, lingering looks cast behind," by *five thousand* children that had been gathered in from the highways and hedges of heathenism, and brought under christian

instruction, upon a single island? Why are they sent back to their idols, and to grope their way down to death in the thick darkness from which the efforts of the missionaries had rescued them? Is this the way to evangelize the nations? Is it thus, that the church is to gain the promised land, by giving up what she had begun to possess?

No—certainly *no*. But these reverses will soon be followed by increased activity and new conquests. The chariot of salvation will roll on. The waiting missionaries will be sent out. The printing presses will all resume their work; and the scattered thousands of scholars will be recalled from the "regions and shadows of death." I feel confident of it. The church has given her pledge long ago at God's altar, and by his grace she will redeem it. Why, if all the heathen children who have, for want of funds, been dismissed from the schools of this Board, could be brought and presented to my present audience, I would undertake to get your pledge for their full support, in half an hour, without taking any thing from your other contributions. You would give it, rather than see one of them go weeping away. And could half a million of such children be presented to the patrons of the American Board, throughout this broad land, they would all be educated. And is the religion

of the Lord Jesus Christ such a thing of sense and impulse and sympathy, that it cannot act upon the perishing, unless they are literally brought across the wide ocean, and laid down at our doors? It cannot be. Our churches will come up to the work, in the name, and in the strength of the Lord of Hosts. Other missionary boards, also, both at home and abroad, will be vigorously sustained, so as rapidly to extend the knowledge and glory of the Lord over the face of the whole earth.

Yes, the conversion of this guilty and miserable world to Christ is the most absolute and the most glorious of all *certainties*, till we come to heaven itself. Whatever else may fail, this will be accomplished. And here, what an immense advantage has the christian over all others, in laboring for the good of future generations. Philanthropists there are, in the common acceptation of the term, who have never studied the prophecies, and who do not pretend to rest upon any divine promise, that the barbarous nations of the world will ever be civilized. With the light of history and experience merely, how little have they to encourage them, in the greatest sacrifices, in the highest efforts they can make. Hitherto mankind have as often sunk as risen, on the scale of intellectual and moral improvement. While the sun has been rising upon

one nation, it has been sinking in the western horizon of others. Hitherto the dark ages have alternated with brighter periods. However luminous some parts of any great cycle may have been, the darkness has again shut in, as if in perfect mockery of all human hopes and labors. Shutting their eyes to the sun of prophecy, the most far-sighted worldly philanthropists must forever grope "at noon day as in the night."

But oh, how different is it with all who keep their eyes steadily fixed upon the great and precious promises of the Bible. Standing as it were upon those very heights, which the ancient seers occupied, and looking down the track of time, they behold kings becoming nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers of the church. They see every pagan temple demolished, and every heathen altar thrown down. With joyful hearts they behold the "waters issuing out from under the sanctuary eastward," and rising and spreading, till they become "waters to swim in, a river that cannot be passed over." They see all Europe turned into one great garden of the Lord—all Asia into another—all Africa into another—all America into another—and all the islands literally becoming "the isles of the blest."

Listening with the holy prophets, we hear the rapturous call to the church, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. And the gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Then shalt thou see and flow together, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the gentiles shall come unto thee." "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

We listen again, and those great voices in heaven break upon our ears, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and then we join the "four and twenty elders, and as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, ALLELUIA, FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH."